

[23 February, 2001] RAJYA SABHA

the gas bank area and near the tea stalls to keep the area clean and to ensure high standard of hygiene.

(c) Instructions have been issued to conduct frequent inspections at different levels to ensure high standard of cleanliness and hygiene in catering premises.

Merger of Railways and General Budgets

324. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal to dispense with the system of a separate Budget being presented by the Railways and merge it with the General Budget; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the proposed merger is likely to take effect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

US aid for upgrading Railway System

325. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have drafted a Plan to upgrade its system and for this purpose U.S. aid has been sought;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the U.S. Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Modernisation and upgradation of the Railways is a continuous and need-based exercise which takes into account the availability of resources and the requirements of the System for ensuring better services and safety standards.

Indian Railways have not sought any aid from the Government of United States of America for the purpose of upgrading their System.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

East Coast Railway

326. **SHRI ANANTA SETHI:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the jurisdiction of East Coast Railway has not yet been finalised;

(b) whether the East Coast Railway has also not become functional yet;

(c) if so, the reasons for the inordinate delay; and

(d) the steps taken to expedite the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The Railways are presently facing acute resource constraints. Even within the available resources, some allocation of funds has been made to progress the efforts. The proposed new Zones will gradually become operational, depending upon the availability of investible resources for this purpose by the Railways.

Railway Projects in NER

327. **DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state the ongoing railway projects and survey works being executed for improvement of railway network in the NER indicating total allocation, target fixed and progress of work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): Railway Projects in NER along with allocation, target fixed and progress of work are given in the Statement.